Spring Turkey Hunter Questionnaire 2004

By Jessica Kitchell

Abstract

Ninety-one (91.4%) percent of all spring turkey hunters that received a harvest permit hunted turkeys during the 2004 spring turkey season. The overall success rate for active hunters was 39.7%. The mean number of Gobblers/Jakes seen by hunters was 5.0 compared to a mean number of hens of 8.7. Just over 66% of the respondents indicated they would like to see the number of hunting permits for their hunting zone to stay the same or decrease. Forty-seven percent (47%) of the respondents indicated that turkey numbers in their hunting zones remained about the same relative to 2003. Statewide, the overall satisfaction level with the spring turkey hunt was 7.3 on a scale of 1 (worst) to 10 (best).

Methods

A sample of hunter names and addresses were randomly drawn from the current spring turkey hunter permit file. A survey was mailed to 9,342 spring turkey hunters after the completion of the spring turkey season. The questionnaire was mailed in proportion to the number of permits distributed in each zone. The questionnaire asked each hunter specific questions about their spring turkey hunting experience (Figure 1). A second mailing was made to 5,000 of the non-respondents. Data from all returned questionnaires were summarized using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

The current spring turkey hunting zones were then grouped into regional areas (Figure 2). The regions were created from zones that had similar turkey populations, hunter densities, and habitat. These regions were created so that responses could be pooled to increase the response rates in some of the less hunted zones.

Results

A total of 4,400 spring turkey hunter surveys were returned. After duplicates were removed, the resulting response rate was 46.7%. The proportion of respondents who applied with landowner preference for this spring's turkey hunt permit was 18.1% (Table 1, Question 1). Statewide, 51.7% of the respondents have 0-5 years of spring turkey hunting experience and only 5.6% have 16+ years of experience (Table 1, Question 2).

Statewide, 91.4% of the respondents hunted turkeys this spring. Of those who did not hunt, 46.1% bought a 2004 wild turkey stamp (Table 1, Question 3). The success rate for active hunters who received a harvest permit was 39.7%. This success rate may be high because hunters who were successful may have been more likely to return the survey than hunters who were unsuccessful. The spring turkey harvest registration data success rate (25.0%) is uncorrected for nonhunters and is probably a low estimate. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents had attended a turkey hunter education clinic sponsored by the WDNR or the National Wild Turkey Federation (Table 1, Question 5).

All surveyed hunters were asked who introduced them to turkey hunting, 39.8% introduced themselves, while 34.6% were introduced by a friend (Table 1, Question 6). Surveyed hunters

were asked how difficult it was to find a place to hunt in the spring of 2004, and 87.5% of the respondents said it was 'very easy' or 'somewhat easy' (Table 1, Question 7). Spring turkey hunters were also asked to report the days on which they hunted. Hunting pressure was relatively constant with more pressure on opening day as well as Friday and Saturday of the hunting season (Table 1, Question 8).

Statewide, the mean # of Gobblers/Jakes seen by hunters was 5.0; the mean # of Gobblers/Jakes heard by hunters was 7.5; the mean # of Hens seen was 8.7, and the mean # of Hens heard was 5.9 (Table 1, Question 9). Most respondents (66.4%) did not shoot at the first turkey which presented an opportunity; 59.8% reported waiting for a better shot, or for an adult gobbler (Table 1, Question 10). Surveyed hunters were asked if they hit any turkeys that they were unable to retrieve; 5.3% were unable to find their bird, 155 hunters reported hitting one turkey, and 8 hunters reported hitting 2 turkeys (Table 1, Question 11). Of the respondents that harvested a turkey, 40.5% with one tag harvested one turkey; 38.8% with two tags harvested one turkey, and 12.9% harvested two turkeys. Most successful hunters (83.1%) harvested their turkeys between sunrise and noon (Table 1, Question 12).

Most respondents (90.0%) hunted on private land or a combination of private and public lands (Table 1, Question 13). Under one-quarter (20.9%) responded to "other hunters kept me from hunting where I wanted to" with 'definitely yes,' or 'somewhat.' Similarly, 16.4% of respondents answered "there was too much competition from other hunters where I hunted" with 'definitely yes,' or 'somewhat.' However, only 13.1% of the respondents indicated that other hunters interfered with their chance to bag a bird (Table 1, Question 14).

One hundred and eleven respondents reported knowing of 1 or more turkeys that were tagged but not registered. One hundred and forty-five respondents reported knowing of 1 or more turkeys that were neither tagged nor registered (Table 1, Question 15).

Overall, 41.6% of respondents rated their spring turkey hunting experience as 'very high' or 'fairly high,' while 19.0% rated their hunt as 'fairly low' or 'very low' (Table 1, Question 16). The most important factor that influenced respondents' perceptions of a quality hunt was "seeing turkeys/calling birds in/hearing gobbling". The least important factor was "killing a turkey (Tom, Jake or bearded hen)" (Table 1, Question 17).

Most respondents (47.0%) feel that turkey numbers in the zones they hunted in the spring stayed the same relative to the year before (Table 1, Question 18). Just over sixty-six percent (66.2%) of the respondents would like to see the number of permits available for the zone(s) they hunted to stay the same or decrease (Table 1, Question 19).

Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with spring turkey hunting in Wisconsin on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best and 1 being the worst; statewide, they ranked their overall satisfaction level at 7.3 (Table 1, Question 20).

Table 1. Responses to the 2004 Spring Turkey Hunting Questionnaire.

C= Central Region EC =East Central Region NE = North Eastern Region NW= North Western Region SE =South Eastern Region SW =South Western Region

1. Did you apply with landowner preference for this spring's turkey permit? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	17.4	16.8	19.6	23.0	18.0	14.8	18.1
No	82.6	83.2	80.4	77.0	82.0	85.2	81.9

2. How many years of spring turkey hunting experience do you have? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
0-5	59.8	51.5	67.5	53.5	56.6	33.5	51.7
6-10	28.7	32.0	24.7	30.3	28.0	31.2	29.2
11-15	9.2	12.2	6.0	11.5	11.8	23.4	13.5
16+	2.4	4.3	1.9	4.7	3.6	11.9	5.6

3. Did you hunt turkeys this spring? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	91.0	91.5	92.6	92.4	90.4	90.4	91.4
No	9.0	8.5	7.4	7.6	9.6	9.6	8.6

If no, did you buy a 2004 wild turkey stamp? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	48.6	45.2	48.2	39.6	60.9	41.2	46.1
No	51.4	54.8	51.8	60.4	39.1	58.8	53.9

- 4. Please list the zone and time period your carcass tag(s) were valid for this spring? (Percent)
- 5. Have you ever attended a turkey hunter education clinic sponsored by the Wisconsin DNR or the National Wild Turkey Federation? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	27.0	26.8	26.0	22.6	24.6	31.8	27.0
No	73.0	73.3	74.0	77.4	75.3	68.1	72.9

6. Who introduced you to turkey hunting? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Parent	11.2	11.4	11.8	10.1	13.2	14.5	12.3
Friend	33.5	32.5	35.5	36.9	33.0	34.7	34.6
Sibling	6.6	7.4	6.7	8.0	5.8	6.0	6.7
Self	43.4	42.8	40.0	37.8	41.0	37.5	39.8
Other	5.3	5.9	6.2	7.2	7.1	7.3	6.6

Other people mentioned were: Spouse, Children, Uncle, Grandparent

7. How difficult was it for you to find a place to hunt in the spring of 2004? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Very Easy	57.7	56.8	53.0	55.2	51.3	55.7	54.9
Somewhat Easy	31.6	30.2	32.8	35.0	30.4	33.4	32.6
Somewhat Difficult	9.4	11.9	12.9	8.7	16.4	9.5	11.2
Very Difficult	1.0	1.2	1.3	1.0	1.9	1.3	1.3

8. Please check all the days that you hunted for turkeys this spring. (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Wednesday	21.2	20.1	21.6	23.3	24.0	20.3	21.6
Thursday	19.0	19.6	19.4	20.4	17.2	19.5	19.3
Friday	21.5	22.0	20.9	21.0	19.9	22.5	21.5
Saturday	22.5	22.9	22.5	20.6	22.4	22.4	22.2
Sunday	15.7	15.5	15.6	14.8	16.5	15.3	15.5

Mean Days Spent Hunting

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Days	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.0	2.9	3.2	3.1

9. Please fill in the number of turkeys you saw or heard while actively hunting. (Mean)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Gobblers/Jakes seen	4.9	4.6	4.8	5.7	5.4	4.8	5.0
Gobblers/Jakes heard	7.2	6.9	6.8	8.4	6.7	8.1	7.5
Hens Seen	10.1	7.9	10.2	9.6	8.4	7.1	8.7
Hens Heard	6.1	4.7	7.3	6.1	6.2	5.4	5.9

10. Did you shoot at the first turkey which presented an opportunity? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	32.0	34.2	33.1	35.1	32.7	33.3	33.5
No	67.8	65.6	66.9	64.9	67.0	66.6	66.4

• If no, please tell us which of the following was the reason. (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Waiting for a better shot	31.5	31.5	31.3	32.7	33.6	29.8	31.5
Waiting for an adult gobbler	27.2	27.4	24.8	28.5	31.0	30.4	28.3
Waiting for a larger bird	9.3	6.9	8.0	9.3	8.5	7.6	8.2
Wanted to hunt longer	5.0	3.9	3.8	4.6	5.0	4.6	4.5
Other	26.9	30.4	32.1	24.9	21.9	27.5	27.6

11. Did you hit a turkey you were unable to retrieve? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	5.5	6.2	5.6	4.9	4.7	5.2	5.3
No	94.5	93.8	94.2	95.0	95.1	94.9	94.6

If yes, how many? (Frequency)

Number of Turkeys	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
1	15	24	34	25	16	41	155
2	0	2	1	2	2	1	8
>2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

12. How many turkeys did you harvest this spring? (Percent)

	Central	Region			East Cent	ral Region	
Tags	None	1 Bird	2 Birds	Tags	None	1 Bird	2 Birds
1	59.7	40.3	n/a	1	63.6	36.5	n/a
2	51.1	42.6	6.4	2	42.2	43.4	14.5
	Northeast	ern Regior	1		Northwest	ern Regior	1
Tags	None	1 Bird	2 Birds	Tags	None	1 Bird	2 Birds
1	62.2	37.8	n/a	1	56.2	43.8	n/a
2	58.4	29.7	11.9	2	40.2	40.2	19.5
	Southeast	ern Regior	1	;	Southwest	ern Regioi	n
Tags	None	1 Bird	2 Birds	Tags	None	1 Bird	2 Birds
1	57.0	43.0	n/a	1	57.9	42.1	n/a
2	41.2	47.1	11.8	2	49.3	38.8	11.9

	All Regions										
Tags	Tags None 1 Bire										
1	59.3	40.7	n/a								
2	48.2	38.9	12.9								

What time did you harvest your turkey(s)? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Sunrise-9am	53.1	61.4	62.7	64.2	55.7	58.3	59.9
9am-Noon	25.9	21.7	20.2	21.7	27.1	24.4	23.2
Noon-3pm	11.6	12.1	9.9	10.1	8.9	9.5	10.1
3pm-5pm	9.5	4.8	7.2	4.1	8.3	7.8	6.8

13. Did you hunt on: (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Public Land	29.8	11.8	7.6	6.3	10.4	5.7	10.0
Your Own Land	25.2	31.6	30.8	28.7	19.2	22.9	26.5
Other Private Land	27.8	42.4	48.5	52.9	57.9	64.5	51.8
Both Public and Private Land	17.2	14.2	13.1	11.8	12.5	7.0	11.7

- 14. Other hunters may have affected your turkey hunt. For each statement below, please check the response which best reflects your 2004 spring hunt. (Percent)
 - Other hunters sometimes kept me from hunting where I wanted to.

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Definitely Yes	8.3	8.4	7.1	7.1	8.2	9.0	8.0
Somewhat	15.3	11.6	13.2	12.6	14.2	12.3	12.9
Not Much	17.8	14.1	14.7	17.5	14.0	17.6	16.1
No, Not At All	58.7	66.0	65.0	62.8	63.6	61.2	62.9

• There was too much competition from other hunters where I hunted.

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Definitely Yes	4.4	3.8	4.9	3.5	3.8	3.8	4.0
Somewhat	12.7	13.0	11.3	11.8	11.9	13.6	12.4
Not Much	23.6	19.7	22.3	22.3	22.4	20.7	21.7
No, Not At All	59.3	63.4	61.3	62.4	61.9	62.0	61.9

Other hunters interfered with my chance to bag a bird.

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Definitely Yes	4.6	4.4	5.9	4.9	5.4	5.2	5.1
Somewhat	8.8	6.8	8.7	7.5	7.9	8.2	8.0
Not Much	15.2	14.6	15.1	16.6	15.1	16.0	15.6
No, Not At All	71.1	73.2	69.8	70.5	71.0	70.3	70.8

- 15. How many turkeys do you know of that were shot by people this spring and were:
- Tagged but not registered (Frequency)

Number of Turkeys	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
1	1	5	7	6	7	16	42
2	2	3	6	5	4	2	22
3	3	0	2	6	1	7	19
≥ 4	1	1	6	9	2	9	28

Not tagged or registered (Frequency)

Number of Turkeys	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
1	5	13	14	17	8	17	74
2	3	3	10	7	1	6	30
3	1	2	2	9	4	3	21
≥ 4	0	2	5	3	2	8	20

16. Overall, how would you rate the quality of your spring 2004 Wisconsin wild turkey hunt this year? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Very High	14.8	18.5	20.2	23.4	26.8	22.8	21.5
Fairly High	20.2	19.3	17.9	22.7	21.2	20.0	20.1
Average	41.7	38.7	38.8	38.9	36.6	40.1	39.2
Fairly Low	15.9	16.4	16.6	10.6	10.4	12.3	13.5
Very Low	7.4	7.1	6.5	4.1	4.8	4.4	5.5

17. Rate the factors that most influence your perception of a "quality" spring turkey hunt. Enter a value of 1 to 7 next to each statement, with "1" having the most effect and "7" having the least effect on your hunting experience. (Mean)

Factor	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
An Opportunity to kill a turkey	3.1	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2
Seeing turkeys/calling birds in/hearing gobbling	2.3	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.2	2.3
Killing a turkey (Tom, Jake or bearded hen)	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.0	4.2	4.1
Killing a mature Tom	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.8
Weather	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.9	4.0
Not seeing other hunters	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8
Spending time with friends and family	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.5	3.0	3.1

18. Do you feel that the turkey numbers have changed from last year in the zones(s) you hunted this spring? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Increased	21.6	21.8	32.7	31.8	35.0	18.6	26.5
Stay the same	45.3	51.0	40.1	43.4	45.3	54.1	47.0
Decreased	24.4	19.9	19.8	16.3	10.5	21.5	19.0
Did not hunt same zone	8.7	7.3	7.5	8.4	9.2	5.7	7.5

19. Would you like to see the number of permits available for the zone(s) you hunted changed? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Increased	35.7	32.7	37.8	35.7	39.7	26.6	33.8
Stay the same	60.0	64.6	57.7	61.0	57.7	68.3	62.3
Decreased	4.3	2.7	4.3	3.3	2.6	5.0	3.9

20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best and 1 being the worst, how would you rate the quality of the DNR's turkey management program? (Mean)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Rating	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.4	7.6	7.4	7.3

State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources dnr.wi.gov

Wisconsin Spring Turkey Hunting Questionnaire s. 23.09(2)(k), Wis. Stats.

Form 2300-117 (R 5/04)

Dear Turkey Hunter:

We are surveying a sample of Wisconsin wild turkey hunting permit holders to obtain needed information for managing Wisconsin's turkeys and setting permit levels. Please take a few minutes to complete the attached voluntary questionnaire. Completion of this survey is voluntary. Your participation in this survey will help us continue to progress in restoring wild turkeys to Wisconsin and in providing Wisconsin hunters with a quality hunt. You should complete this questionnaire even if you did not hunt or harvest a turkey. Please note information on this form will remain confidential and will not be used for any other purpose.

When you have finished, reverse the flap on this questionnaire, tape the edge and mail. Using your stamp will save the Department funds needed for management, even though no postage is required to return the questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Keith Warnke Upland Ecologist

1.	Did you apply with landowner preference for thunt permit?	his spring's turkey	2.	How many yea (Check ONE)	ars of spring turke	ey hunting exper	ience do you have?
	•	Yes No		0-5	6-10	11-15	<u> </u>
3.	Did you hunt turkeys this spring?	Yes No	4.	Please list the for this spring:		riod your carcass	s tag(s) were valid
	If no, did you buy a 2004 wild turkey stamp?	☐ Yes ☐ No		ror and spring.	Zone:		
					Zone:		
				(Note: See ma	np and Seasonal D	ates)	
5.	Have you ever attended a turkey hunter educate	ion clinic sponsored b	y the	Wisconsin DN	NR and/or the Nat	ional Wild Turk	ey Federation?
	Yes No						
6.	Who introduced you to turkey hunting?						
	Parent						
	Friend						
	Sibling						
	= ~						
	Self						
	Other:						
_	IF VOIL DID NOT HINT	PI FASE STOP H	FDF	AND DETUD	N THE OUEST	ONNAIRE	
7	IF YOU DID NOT HUNT, PLEASE STOP HERE AND RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE. 7. How difficult was it for you to find a place to hunt in the spring of 2004?						
		newhat easy		ewhat difficult	□ <i>1</i> /	lifficult	
	☐ Very easy ☐ Son	iewnat easy	бош	ewnat difficult	☐ very (mmeun	
	Please list the zone(s) and time period(s) and ch				e number of turk		
	you hunted for turkeys this spring. (If your tags	were for one zone				for one zone an	d time period, fill
	and time period, fill out one column only.)		out	one column on	ıly.)		
Z	Zone: Zone:	. Period:		Zone:	_ Period:	Zone:	Period:
	☐ Wednesday ☐	Wednesday		Gob	blers/Jakes seen		Gobblers/Jakes seen
	Thursday	Thursday		Gob	blers/Jakes heard		Gobblers/Jakes heard
	Friday	Friday			s seen	1	Hens seen
		Saturday		Hens	s heard	1	Hens heard
	☐ Sunday ☐ ☐	Sunday					

Figure 1. 2004 Spring Turkey Hunting Questionnaire.

	_
10. Did you shoot at the first turkey which presented an opportunity?	11. Did you hit a turkey you were unable to retrieve?
Yes No	Yes No If yes, how many?
If no, please tell us which of the following was the reason.	12. How many turkeys did you harvest this spring?
Waiting for a better shot.	
Waiting for an adult gobbler. (Did not want to shoot a jake.)	What time did you harvest your turkey(s)?
☐ Waiting for a larger bird. ☐ Wanted to hunt longer.	Turkey #1: Sunrise-9 am 9 am-Noon Noon-3 pm 3 pm-5 pm
Other (please describe)	Turkey #2: Sunrise-9 am 9 am-Noon Noon-3 pm 3 pm-5 pm
13. Did you hunt on:	
Public land Your own land	Other Private land Both public and private land
 Other hunters may have affected your turkey hunt. For each statement. 	ent below, please check the response which best reflects your 2004 spring
Other hunters sometimes kept me from hunting where I wanted to.	Definitely Yes Somewhat Not Much No, Not At All
·	
There was too much competition from other hunters where I hunted.	
Other hunters interfered with my chance to bag a bird.	
15. How many turkeys do you know of that were shot by people this spring and were:	Overall, how would you rate the quality of your spring 2004 Wisconsin wild turkey hunt this year? (Check ONE)
Tagged but not registered	
Not tagged or registered	Uvery High
(Note: You will NOT be contacted about this.)	
17. Rate the factors that most influence your perception of a quality spring turkey hunt. Enter a value of 1 to 7 next to each statement, with "1" having the most effect and "7" having the least effect on your hunting experience.	18. Do you feel that the turkey numbers have changed from last year in the zone(s) you hunted this spring? (If your tags were for one zone, fill out one column only.)
An opportunity to kill a turkey	Zone; Zone;
Seeing turkeys/Calling birds in/hearing gobbling	
Killing a turkey (Tom, Jake or bearded hen)	☐ Increased ☐ Increased ☐ Stay the same ☐ Stay the same
Killing a mature Tom Weather	Decreased Decreased
Not seeing other hunters	☐ Did not hunt ☐ Did not hunt
Spending time with friends and family	same zone same zone
19. Would you like to see the number of permits available for the zone(s) you hunted changed? (If your tags were for one zone, fill out one column only.)	20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best and 1 being the worst, rate your overall satisfaction with spring turkey hunting in Wisconsin.
Zone: Zone:	Circle one:
☐ Increased ☐ Increased	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Stay the same Stay the same	
Decreased Decreased	
Seasonal Dates:	
Period Dates	
A April 14 - 18 B April 21 - 25	
C April 28 - May 2	
D May 5 - 9 E May 12 - 16	
F May 19 - 23	

Figure 1. Continued.



Figure 2. Turkey Regions.